

The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)

The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is a partnership of six international organizations (the OSCE, REC, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP and NATO as an associated partner) that aims at identifying and reducing interlinked environment and security risks through strengthening cooperation among and within countries in four regions: Eastern Europe, South Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Specific regional developments during the reporting quarter include the following:

Southern Caucasus

ENVSEC responded to a request by the government of Georgia to support a forest fire management training for local fire-fighters in Borjomi National Park. The training was followed by a meeting with local administrations and community members and a national roundtable in Tbilisi, organized with the help of the Global Fire Monitoring Centre. In Armenia, ENVSEC assisted the Government in addressing environmental and health problems associated with the Nubarashen pesticide burial site near Yerevan, which is estimated to have more than 500 tons of dangerous and banned pesticides. The creation of a working group under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office to coordinate the recovery and rehabilitation of the site and a public hearing at the European Parliament signified the importance given to this issue by the national and international partners. Finally, upon the request of the government of Armenia, ENVSEC undertook an assessment of mining sites that could constitute a danger to populations and the environment. Civil society involvement in ENVSEC activities also gained significant momentum in Armenia and Azerbaijan through implementation of CASE Small Grants Programme.

Eastern Europe

During the reporting period, the Government of Belarus approved the application of the Espoo Convention on the Neman River. As part of a project to improve flood monitoring, ENVSEC counterparts in Belarus and Ukraine prepared risks maps in the Styr- Prostyr sub-basin of the Pripjat River, in consultation with communities, the media and local authorities. In the Dniester area, UNEP together with the OSCE and UNECE, convened a stakeholder meeting in Odessa, where a new working group for climate change and floods was launched. The same project organized an annual festival for children from the two banks of the Dniester River (Ukraine and Moldova). In the Danube region, the VIII Standing Working Group under the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICDPR) adopted a resolution supporting the development of the Danube delta analysis and management plan, followed up by an ENVSEC project led by UNEP and UNECE, and implemented jointly with the ICDPR.

South-Eastern Europe

In Q3, ENVSEC began the implementation of a new programme funded by Finland and Austria, "Transforming Risks into Cooperation," to prevent and reduce tensions over shared natural resources, pollution and waste. Under the project "Governance, Implementation and Enforcement of Illegal Logging in Eastern and South Eastern Europe," ENVSEC conducted several diagnostic audits that helped assess the magnitude of illegal logging in the region and ways to address it. In parallel, a Regional Report on illegal logging in South-Eastern Europe was drafted. The report adopts a regional approach to the illegal logging issue, and provides conclusions and policy recommendations to tackle the problem on a regional scale, including through the establishment of a regional platform. During the reporting period, ENVSEC activities in the Timok river basin included the production of a short movie to inform and raise awareness of ENVSEC's project to ensure cooperation and dialogue between Serbia and Bulgaria for the management of the river (<http://timok.rec.org/>). In addition, ENVSEC partners, in consultation with Government, local authorities and communities, supported the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the implementation of the principles of the Aarhus Convention. After having organized a study visit to the Aarhus Information Centre in Albania and a national workshop on provisions and requirements of the Aarhus Convention, the project re-launched the web portal of the Department for Environmental Protection of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina providing both access to relevant information and facilitate public participation opportunities.

Central Asia

ENVSEC's work on the impacts of climate change in Central Asia, which is embedded in the UNDP programme on climate change in Central Asia, was progressed through an international training course for high-level officials and experts held in Moscow, Russia from 16-20 August. During the course, delegations from the five Central Asian countries learned from the experience of the Russian Federation with regard to the maintenance and management of hydro-technical installations, and were briefed on recent scientific developments in this area. The project on addressing the consequences of uranium waste in Central Asia also made significant progress by prioritizing, together with the national government of Kyrgyzstan, a number of projects to be submitted to donors for funding. During this process, a UNEP expert was deployed through the secretariat of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) in Vienna to assist in analysing environmental impacts of radioactive waste management and identify measures for protecting health and the environment from radioactive contamination, in coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Finally, an ENVSEC newsletter in Russian highlighting the status of ENVSEC work programme and updates from ENVSEC projects in Central Asia was developed (see <http://ws.undp.sk/enveng+envsec/envsec-central-asia-newsletter-2010+13479>).



In the third quarter of 2010, ENVSEC assessed potential threats to populations and the environment resulting from mining sites throughout Armenia

For more information on the Environment and Security Initiative, please contact:

Ms Laura RIO
ENVSEC Senior Programme Manager
UNEP Regional Office for Europe
11-13 chemin des Anémones
CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland
Tel : 00 41 22 917 8207
Email: laura.rio@unep.org

www.envsec.org